

# **MEMORANDUM**

## **County of Placer**

### **Planning Department**

**TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**FROM: Planning Department - Frederic K. Yeager**

**DATE: October 9, 2003**

**SUBJECT: West Placer County Land Use Issues**

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#### **SUMMARY:**

The Planning Department is bringing forward a discussion about land use issues in West Placer County to seek direction from the Board of Supervisors in light of a wide variety of development issues that will significantly affect the pattern of growth and resource protection in this area.

Two General Plan amendment requests have been submitted: 1) the Placer Ranch project on 2213 acres in the western portion of the Sunset Industrial Area to include a branch campus of CSU Sacramento and residential, commercial and industrial uses and 2) the De La Salle University and Community on 1100 acres located south of Pleasant Grove Creek and west of the proposed West Roseville Specific Plan Area, to include a full scale private university and a residential and commercial community. These two projects have the potential to impact two other on-going projects, the County's Habitat Conservation Plan and conservation strategy, and the Placer Parkway proposal. Other major projects in the West Placer County area that should be considered in this context are the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan project (5200 acres) and the West Roseville Specific Plan and Sphere of Influence Amendment (5500 acres).

#### **BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:**

Growth in the west part of the County has made Placer County the fastest growing County in the State. Much of this growth has been within the Cities of Roseville, Rocklin and Lincoln. In addition, the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan project, under consideration and study for the last several years, has the potential to urbanize the area to the south of Baseline Road. The West Roseville Specific Plan and the proposed Roseville sphere of influence expansion of the "MOU" area, could result in the urbanization of a large area to the west of Fiddymont Road. Finally, the Phase 1 Habitat Conservation Plan, and the conservation strategy that must accompany it, will identify areas that need to be conserved throughout the western part of the County.

The newly proposed Placer Ranch and De La Salle projects would create substantial new growth beyond that addressed in the existing County General Plan. At the same time the projects are proposing to bring a large public university and a smaller private university to the region. A number of studies have been prepared, some under the County's direction, that have demonstrated the impact of and need for higher education facilities in this region. The desirability of having a university locate in Placer County and the possible desirable primary and secondary impacts of

higher education facilities have been addressed in various studies and is not an issue which is questioned in this report.

Richard Rosan, the president of the Urban Land Institute, in a presentation titled "The Key Role of Universities in Our Nation's Economic Growth and Urban Revitalization" (Exhibit 13) has stated, "Few institutions have more to offer in propelling economic development on both a national and local basis than our nation's colleges and universities. They are the creators and disseminators of knowledge and understanding that can help address urban challenges. As leading institutions in their communities, they are powerful economic drivers, technology centers, employers, developers and investors." In addition to these potential economic benefits, other social and cultural benefits may follow. "The traditional insularity of universities is being superseded by the solidarity of school and community. Urban universities are putting their money and human capital to work in collaboration and cooperation with the local government, and the non-profit and private sector. They are targeting a wide range of issues, including local economic development projects, affordable housing, public health services and environmental protection." There is ".....an increasing emphasis on the university's role as a major civic participant, and on the responsibility of the university faculty and staff to be engaged in community issues that affect the university either directly or indirectly. Certainly, greater involvement in housing and community development is one manifestation of this civic engagement. In addition, universities are expanding their teaching and research focus to include social outreach to youth and families, kindergarten through high school education, information technology and public policy."

#### **DIRECTION REQUESTED:**

With all of this activity taking place at one time, and because of the long-term policy implications of these activities, the staff will be asking the Board for consideration in providing policy direction. Such direction will assist the County and landowners in addressing the inevitable issues that arise in the review of major projects such as these. The direction provided by the Board will guide the ongoing development review, environmental review, infrastructure planning, and HCP process and establish a framework for the consideration of changes in General Plan policies, if they are to be considered.

Neither of the proposed development projects would comply with the current policy language found in Part III of the General Plan - "General Standards for the Consideration of Future Amendments to the General Plan". In addition, both proposals would require the modification of numerous General Plan policies including those that address buffers between incompatible uses, agricultural preservation, orderly development and extension of services, and for Placer Ranch, preservation of industrial land/job creation and other policies of the Sunset Industrial Plan. Other issues that affect one or both of the proposals include, availability of services including sewer, water and adequate road capacity, location of the future Placer Parkway, the County/City of Roseville Memorandum of Understanding and the immediate cancellation of a Williamson Act contract. However, both proposals will bring benefits to the County as well, including economic growth and institutions of higher learning that would implement General Plan Policy 4.J.17 which calls for higher education programs and facilities to be available to Placer County residents.

The staff is seeking direction from the Board on a number of specific issues and overall direction on the continued consideration of the four proposals discussed below.

In order to assist the Board in addressing the issues at hand, the four proposals are described first, followed by a discussion of fourteen major topics or issues. Finally, Exhibit 16 (pink pages) contains the nine most important that summarize the discussion topics raised in this report, organizes them to consolidate similar issues, and presents questions and alternative possible responses for the Board's consideration.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS:**

Following is detailed information about the two newly proposed development projects, the two related infrastructure projects, and a topical discussion of issues that will affect the review, timing, design, or location.

### Placer Ranch

The Placer Ranch project is proposed on a 2213 acre site within the Sunset Industrial Area that borders the City of Roseville and is located partially within the City of Roseville sphere of influence. The landfill borders a portion of the site on the north. Fiddymont Road bisects the property and Sunset Blvd. currently terminates near the east end of the site. Although the Placer Parkway alignment has yet to be determined, project plans show it crossing through the northern portion of the site with two interchanges.

Proposal - A formal application has not yet been submitted, but the applicants have given the Planning Department a proposal statement and accompanying site plans. The proposed project has recently been revised to incorporate higher residential densities, pocket parks, a pedestrian orientation and two Village Commercial Centers, one close to the campus and higher density residential uses and the other close to major business centers and higher density residential uses. The proposal includes the following land uses:

- Site area: 2,213.4 +/- acres
- Residential acreage: 507 acres
- Total Residential units: 4794
  - S.F. Residential 4-8 units/acre: 2610
  - Multi-Family 18 units/acre: 1651
  - Mixed Use Residential units: 533
- Commercial Acreage: 194 acres
  - Mixed Use: 43 acres
  - General Commercial: 60 acres
  - Highway Service: 91 acres
- Total Commercial square footage: 1,454,120
- Office and Professional Acreage: 218 acres
- Office and Professional Square footage: 1,905,227
- Industrial Acreage: 548
  - Industrial: 104 acres
  - Industrial Park: 153 acres
  - Business Park: 289 acres
- Total Industrial Square footage: 6,180,607
- CSUS Branch Campus acres: 245 acres
- University enrollment projected: 15,000+

Other schools: 20 acres  
Parks/Detention Basin: 90 acres  
Open Space: 104 acres  
Core Right of Way: 291 acres

Current general plan and zoning designations - The entire site is within the Sunset Industrial Area Plan. Approximately 40% of the site is within the Industrial land use category, with a small node of commercial, and the remaining 60% is designated Agricultural, 80 acre minimum. This Agricultural area of the site is within the Planning Area designated as Agricultural/Fairgrounds Relocation Area, which is considered one of the prime sites for a re-location of the Placer County Fairgrounds currently located in the City of Roseville. Most of the Industrial designated land is zoned Farm - Development Reserve - 160 acre building site, with a small portion zoned Commercial and Industrial Park. The Agricultural area is zoned Farm, 80 acre minimum parcel size.

Entitlements - No formal application has yet been submitted. Applicants are requesting a two-tier environmental document and a consultant has been selected. The evaluation would begin with a Constraints Analysis, with special emphasis on traffic issues early in the process. The information provided in the constraints analysis will be utilized in developing a Specific Plan for the project site. Other initial entitlements sought include General Plan amendments, Sunset Industrial Area Plan amendments and a rezoning. Later entitlements would include subdivisions, use permits, design review, etc.

#### De La Salle University and Community

The De La Salle/Christian Brothers University project is proposed on 1100 acres of land located south of Pleasant Grove Creek between Brewer Road and the western boundary of the City of Roseville's proposed West Roseville Specific Plan. The site is approximately three miles north of Baseline Road.

Proposal - De La Salle University and Community will be modeled after St. Mary's College in Moraga. The University is planned as a four-year liberal arts residential campus, with a variety of undergraduate and graduate degrees. The entire De La Salle University property is comprised of two parts: the 600 acre campus itself, and the adjoining 500 acres, the De La Salle Community property. The development of the adjoining De La Salle Community is proposed to fund the construction and operation of the De La Salle University campus. The proposal includes concepts like mixed uses with interaction between neighborhoods, shopping and employment opportunities, educational and recreational facilities that promote alternatives to single occupant vehicles including a pedestrian orientation and transit opportunities. The proposed land uses include:

Site area: 1,100 acres  
Residential acreage: 365 acres  
Total Residential units: 2342  
    S.F. Residential 4.5-7 units/acre: 1662  
    Multi-family 17 units/acre: 680  
Commercial acreage: 73 acres  
    Community Commercial: 70 acres  
    Neighborhood Commercial: 3 acres  
Commercial square footage: 954,000

University campus acreage: 600 acres  
University enrollment projected: 6,000  
Parks: 31 acres  
School: 11 acres  
Open Space/Parkway: 20 acres

Current general plan and zoning designations - The General Plan designation is Agriculture/Timber, 80 acre minimum and the zoning is Farm, 80 acre minimum parcel size.

Entitlements - The applicants have applied for a General Plan amendment and rezoning, including creation of a new University zone district. They will also be preparing a Specific Plan for consideration by the County. They are requesting that preparation of an EIR begin as soon as possible. Later entitlements will include subdivisions, use permit, design review, etc.

#### Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan

In 1998, the Board of Supervisors directed the Planning Department to initiate the open space conservation program now known as the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program. As a part of this program the Board directed the staff to seek to obtain program-level (i.e., regional) permits for regulatory compliance with the federal and state Endangered Species Acts and for federal Clean Water Act requirements for wetlands. In order to comply with this direction, the staff has initiated the preparation of a Natural Communities Conservation Plan to address state-listed endangered species (NCCP), a Habitat Conservation Plan to address federally listed endangered species (HCP) and a Programmatic General Permit for wetlands. These permits will take the form of our implementation agreement between the County, participating local agencies, and the State & Federal regulatory agencies. Placer County would be responsible for integrating the State/Federal regulatory requirements into the County's development review process. The program is intended to improve our ability to adequately compensate for losses to our biological resources, and also to provide certainty and streamlining of the development process.

The NCCP/HCP effort has been divided into three phases with the first phase encompassing western Placer County (essentially the unincorporated area west of Meadow Vista/Christian Valley). Phase 2 is in the upper foothills of the Sierra Nevada and on the east slope (e.g., Martis Valley) and the third phase is the central portion of the Sierra Nevada range. Priority has been given to completing the Phase 1 area due to the number of species and the potential for growth to affect those species and their habitat. Key habitats include vernal pools, grasslands, riparian areas, oak woodlands, and streams.

Staff has recently released a conservation strategy overview for the Phase 1 area. This overview discusses a number of guiding principles that will provide a foundation for the preparation of the Conservation Plan for the NCCP/HCP. It also provides background information on existing conditions and provides a number of potential or draft implementation alternatives. A number of the conclusions reached in this document are relevant to the discussion before the Board at this time. The important conclusions include the following:

- All of the present biological value, but not necessarily all of the present land acreage, will need to be conserved in order to meet the conservation goals and regulatory requirements of the Conservation Plan.

- The Western Placer of the future has a limited capacity for further urbanization as historically conducted if the conservation goals and objectives of the NCCP/HCP are to be met and Placer County's quality of life is to be preserved. Conservation will thus require modifications to urban growth patterns with conservation emphasis placed outside of the urban areas.
- Conservation of agricultural lands and provision of low intensity public recreation has broad public support in the County and will be included in the Conservation Plan and considered along with conservation of the natural communities themselves.
- The majority, but not all, of the Conservation Plan will have to be put in place through fees or "in-lieu" land dedications with endowments as mitigation for urban/suburban development and other activities that could result in impacts to natural communities, agricultural land, or protected species.
- The large scale of conservation needed cannot be accomplished solely by preserving biological values on the site of future public and private projects.
- Onsite conservation will be considered only when concerns about habitat integrity, fragmentation, isolation, management capability, and land use compatibility are suitably addressed, such as when onsite preservation areas can be attached or linked to larger conservation areas.
- Conservation lands should be located within Placer County. In limited circumstances, out-of-county mitigation may occur where there is a reasonable biological justification such as watershed relationship, species population relationships or opportunities to improve connectivity.
- Mitigation will need to be in place before project impacts occur.
- State and federal permits are expected to run until 2050, but would describe a system of monitoring and adaptive management that would allow the program to run indefinitely.
- The general plans of the County and any participating cities will likely need to be supplemented by policy amendments, specific implementing ordinances, and procedural requirements for development permitting and CEQA compliance.

The above conclusions are based upon the evaluation of the current General Plan of the County and the General Plans of the 5 west Placer cities. The projects being reviewed by the Board of Supervisors would contribute additional impacts and could affect the ability to successfully implement the NCCP/HCP. It is premature to determine the exact impact of these projects on the NCCP/HCP because of the tentative status of the projects. However, it is possible to identify a number of areas of concern.

- The projects, as currently proposed, will displace substantial additional natural communities including vernal pools, grasslands, wetlands, and riparian areas.
- Habitat within the development areas not proposed for direct impact will remain in a highly fragmented condition in an urban setting. Such habitats will have substantially diminished values, be incapable of active management required of the adaptive management component of a conservation plan, and will most likely not have viable connections with surrounding protected communities.
- Onsite avoidance will most likely be less successful than large-scale offsite conservation and restoration unless large habitat acreage can be dedicated to conservation (and assured active management) or small, highly unique, natural communities are located on the property.
- The projects will contribute to cumulative impacts. This cumulative impact is becoming increasingly important due to the limited amount of suitable conservation lands that remain

in the landscape of western Placer County. The western County undeveloped landscape can be viewed in much the same way we consider surface water supplies for urban growth, i.e., there is only so much available without having to revert to alternatives such as groundwater, increased efficiency, etc. Our conservation landscape is a critical component of our community and there is a finite supply that must be conserved. Depletion of open space and agricultural land by near-term development could foreclose critical agricultural and open space opportunities and become a rigid constraint on necessary development in the future.

- If these projects are added to the existing buildout development scenario anticipated in County/City General Plans, it will likely be necessary to conserve substantial portions of the remaining landscape and to conduct costly restoration activities to maintain suitable biological values.

#### Placer Parkway

Placer Parkway is a planned multi-modal transportation corridor that will connect Hwy 65 to Hwy 99/70 in Sutter County. The current effort underway will result in the establishment of a route alignment in order to preserve the corridor from development pressures. The studies have been started and will cost about \$5 million and take four to five years to complete. The route alignment process must follow federal procedures as federal funds are being used on this project. The federal agencies require that a route be selected that will minimize impacts to the environment. Approval of a land development project along the corridor prior to route selection is problematic. This is because a highway alignment that avoids a newly approved project at the expense of the environment would face serious and possibly fatal obstacles. The later section on Placer Parkway will address this issue in more detail and offer alternatives to reduce the risk to the future establishment of a route.

#### Other Related Major Development Proposals

##### West Roseville Specific Plan (WRSP)

The West Roseville Specific Plan comprises 3,161 acres currently zoned Farm, 80 acre minimum and proposed to be annexed to the City of Roseville. This area is outside Roseville's current Sphere of Influence, therefore an amended Sphere is proposed. The City of Roseville is also proposing to add an additional 2,365 acres to their Sphere of Influence. These areas are located to the north and south of the proposed WRSP project.

Project Description: 8,430 residential units of varying densities and 163 acres of commercial and industrial uses.

Status: The West Roseville Specific Plan EIR is being prepared by the City of Roseville. The County has commented on the Administrative Draft documents. The Draft EIR was released in September for public review.

##### Placer Vineyards Specific Plan (PVSP)

Site and Acreage: 5,158 acres - most is currently zoned Farm, 80 acre minimum and a relatively small amount of the area is zoned Residential Agriculture, 10 acre minimum.

Project Description: Phase 1 is on 2,264 acres - 7,632 residential units and 3,909,510 square feet of non-residential development are proposed. Phases 2 and 3 would be on 961 and 1797 acres respectively. It is anticipated that Phase 2 will accommodate a total of 3,980 residential units and 1,304,562 square feet of non-residential development and that Phase 3 will accommodate a total of 2,520 residential units and 1,470,339 square feet of non-residential development.

Status: In 1994 the Placer County General Plan was amended to allow for this level of development with the preparation and adoption of a Specific Plan, currently in progress. The County has been reviewing the Administrative Draft EIR, but the Draft EIR has not yet been released to the public. This will likely occur within the next few months. The public and interested agencies and organizations will have the opportunity to comment on the EIR. When the Final EIR is released, public hearings to consider the EIR and adoption of the Specific Plan will be scheduled before the Planning Commission and then the Board of Supervisors. Individual project applications (subdivisions, use permits, etc.) will follow adoption of the Specific Plan.

## **DISCUSSION OF TOPICS**

The following is a discussion of topics that are raised by the proposals under discussion. The topics are by no means all inclusive, however they do contain the most important issues that will need to be addressed in proceeding with planning for the western part of Placer County. It is no surprise that the two development projects being discussed, Placer Ranch and De La Salle University and Community, present a challenge in terms of a comparison to the current General Plan policies. The current General Plan did not anticipate such projects and therefore the policies of the Plan will not "fit" the projects in all cases. In many cases the policies are applicable to development generally and may be applicable to these projects as well.

This report has recognized the potential benefits of the university components of the proposed projects. These benefits are real and are likely to be meaningful to the residents of the County. In order to balance those benefits there must be an identification of the potential costs, not only in monetary terms but also in a broader sense. The following section addresses a number of issues that will need to be resolved if the projects are to proceed. In some cases there are alternatives to the projects as proposed that could be made that would minimize potential impacts or changes that would better address some of the issues raised.

The questions contained at the end of each section are intended to stimulate thought and more clearly identify choices that will need to be made at some point. They are not intended to be answered as a part of the Board's discussion. It is Exhibit 16 that contains a summary of the issues and alternative responses that may enable the Board to provide meaningful direction at the conclusion of this workshop.

**A. GENERAL STANDARDS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PLAN** - Part III of the General Plan discusses the timing, circumstances and standards for consideration of future General Plan amendments (Exhibit 6). The General Plan indicates that the most appropriate location for additional growth, and the area that will be considered first by the County, is the "Future Study Area" in southwest Placer County. It goes on to state that the County will not consider GPAs in the Future Study Area until the West Placer Specific Plan, now known as the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan, has been adopted by the County. It is anticipated that the PVSP will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for consideration in 2004. The General Plan goes on to state that at that time, the County will evaluate past development



trends, market demand, and other factors to determine if it is appropriate to consider future amendments within this area.

"4. Prior to consideration of such GPAs the following should have occurred or been demonstrated.

a. There is a market demand for additional urban or suburban development within the regional analysis area of the County proposed for such development, following an examination of current growth projections, available land, and existing development."

The De La Salle University site is within the Future Study Area. The Placer Ranch site is not within the Future Study Area.

As part of this consideration it is important to evaluate the current status of General Plan build out and what holding capacity remains in order to accommodate future growth. Because the market demand is not limited to the unincorporated area, as a part of any such evaluation it is important to consider the holding capacity of the incorporated area as well. Most jurisdictions in the greater Sacramento metropolitan area use statistics from SACOG to identify growth trends and population and employment projections. A review of SACOG's data provides good background information when considering the timing of future general plan amendments. The California Department of Finance (DOF) also provides useful information on current population estimates and total County estimates for the year 2040.

#### **Current Population**

The DOF estimate for the current County population (2003) is 275,600 which is broken down as follows:

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Population</b>
Colfax	1,710
Auburn	12,250
Loomis	6,175
Rocklin	43,600
Lincoln	20,550
Roseville	90,700
Unincorporated	100,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>275,600</b>

#### **2040 Population**

For 2040, DOF has projected a County population total of 522,214 persons. To staff's knowledge the DOF 2040 population estimate has not been broken down by jurisdiction. The additional growth between now and 2040 is estimated to be 246,614 persons occupying approximately 101,907 households (at a County-wide average of 2.42 persons/dwelling unit).

### **Holding Capacity**

The holding capacity as represented in the following chart is derived from the existing adopted General Plan land use designations. The figures below represent the holding capacity of the County but do not include the holding capacity of the Tahoe Basin. Also, the figures represent the current holding capacity as opposed to the proposed holding capacity associated with the proposed Martis Valley and Foresthill Community Plans, or the West Roseville Specific Plan.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Total Remaining Dwelling Unit Holding Capacity</b>	<b>Remaining Population Holding Capacity</b>
Colfax	525	1,271
Auburn	8,135	19,687
Loomis	3,371	8,159
Rocklin	13,585	32,876
Lincoln	15,078	36,489
Roseville	20,136	48,729
Unincorporated	116,177	281,148
<b>Total Available Holding Capacity</b>	177,007	428,359

### **Buildout**

The buildout population is simply based upon the total amount of land devoted to residential land uses and what intensity of residential development has been assigned to those uses. A number of factors can affect the buildout estimate including person/household densities, vacancy rates, variable rates of absorption from one community to the next and percentage of vacation housing. For purposes of this brief assessment, the staff is simply presenting the total residential holding capacity expressed in the various general plans of the County and the Cities multiplied by 2.42 persons/dwelling unit. This estimate presents an “order of magnitude” that could be considerably refined. The data is derived from the SACOG “Blueprint” program.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Current Population</b>	<b>Remaining Holding Capacity</b>	<b>Total Buildout Population</b>
Colfax	1,710	1,271	2,981
Auburn	12,250	19,687	31,937
Loomis	6,175	8,159	14,334
Rocklin	43,600	32,876	76,476
Lincoln	20,550	36,489	57,039
Roseville	90,700	48,729	139,429
Unincorporated	100,600	281,148	381,748
<b>Total</b>	275,600	428,359	703,944

### **Summary**

The remaining holding capacity represents an increment of growth of approximately 181,700 persons above the 2040 population estimate of the Department of Finance. With the adjustments that may result from reductions in holding capacity with the Martis Valley and Foresthill

Community Plans, increases from the proposed West Roseville Specific Plan, and an assumed reduction in capacity because of environmental and infrastructure constraints; there is an assumed increment of growth available for at least 40-50 years based on existing General Plans of the Cities and County. The issue at hand will revolve around the demand that exists within smaller areas and whether currently planned growth areas are suitably located to best accommodate new growth.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Should the County process the proposed General Plan amendments prior to the adoption of the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan? 2. Is it appropriate to direct each project proposal to fully address and meet the list of standards and requirements outlined in Part III of the General Plan? 4. Should the Placer Ranch project be treated differently since it is not within the Future Study Area?

## **B. WEST PLACER LAND USE ISSUES FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Preliminary studies provide a framework for further evaluation of the economic and fiscal implications associated with the development of universities. Development of a university would bring broad, although potentially indirect, economic benefit to the community. In addition, university purchasing and consumer spending, along with real estate development stimulated by the university, may promote more direct local economic activity. These potential benefits must be weighed against the loss of property tax that would occur with a tax-exempt institution and the service costs that would be associated with a university and any surrounding development.

With both proposals a tax- exempt institution would replace other land uses. The universities and proposed residential development would replace agricultural land and, in the case of Placer Ranch, some potential revenue generating (property-tax) light industrial uses and business uses in the Sunset Industrial Area that tend to be economically beneficial to the County. Fiscal modeling suggests that these non-residential uses offset more costly uses, primarily residential, that occur in other areas of the County.

Since there would be a loss of property tax and a residential population is introduced, that in part, would replace the land uses planned for employee population; one might expect that the change in land use may generate higher costs, relative to revenues, than would the existing land use scenario. The mix and character of uses both on and off campus, the proximity of ancillary services, the type and amount of retail development on or near the campus, and the extent to which the universities provide their own public services, are material to the fiscal balance of the project(s). Other elements, such as in-lieu property taxes and university provided community amenities could further tip the balance and mitigate potential fiscal impacts.

While there are broad social and economic benefits that may result from construction of higher education facilities in Placer County, the specific impacts to the County must be further evaluated should the Board provide direction for consideration of these proposals. Such evaluation should include fiscal impact studies identifying more specific direct and indirect impacts of the projects, comparisons with existing/proposed land uses (delineation of opportunity costs) and planning of projects in such a way that fiscal impacts are minimized.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: What mix of land uses, on both a project and countywide level, will create an appropriate balance of fiscal, environmental, and social issues?

**C. PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND** - There are numerous General Plan goals and policies that call for the preservation of agriculturally zoned lands and agricultural uses as well as the preservation of a viable agricultural segment of the economy in Placer County. They include the following policies:

“1.H.1. - The County shall maintain agriculturally-designated areas for agricultural uses and direct urban uses to designated urban growth areas and/or cities.

“1.H.2. - The County shall seek to ensure that new development and public works projects do not encourage expansion of urban uses into designated agricultural areas.”

“Goal 7.A: To provide for the long-term conservation and use of agriculturally-designated lands.

7.A.1. - The County shall protect agriculturally-designated areas from conversion to non-agricultural uses.”

The intent of these policies is to support the continued viability of the agricultural economy. In addition, Placer County policies support conservation of agricultural land to serve as wildlife habitat and working visual open space that is integral to the rural quality of life that makes this area a unique and desirable place to live.

Both projects are outside areas designated for urban uses except for a portion of the Placer Ranch site which is designated for future industrial uses. The Placer Ranch site is primarily designated Agricultural and 640 acres are encumbered by a Williamson Act contract. The De La Salle University site is entirely designated for agricultural use and a large portion is currently planted in rice. With the westward expansion of development with the Placer Vineyards, West Roseville Specific Plan, De La Salle and Placer Ranch projects, intervening agricultural lands would also be impacted and likely considered for conversion to urban uses (the City of Roseville's discussion of the balance of the MOU area in the WRSP EIR demonstrates this point). In addition, further westward expansion requests beyond these project sites may be made if there is no clear boundary beyond which urban growth will be prohibited.

As you will read in more detail under item K, four alternative conservation and growth scenarios have been evaluated for the NCCP/HCP. From the land cover analysis prepared, it has been possible to estimate the amount of agricultural land in the West Placer area that will be developed in each of the four scenarios analyzed. The currently undeveloped area of West Placer County encompasses 130,236 acres, of that 103,506 acres are either currently utilized for agriculture or suitable for certain types of agricultural pursuits. The crops include alfalfa, irrigated pasture, rice, row crops, vineyards and seasonal grains. In addition, substantial acreage is identified as annual grassland, oak woodland savannah, Valley Oak woodland and vernal pool complex, all of which are grazed or suitable for grazing for livestock production.

Without amending the General Plan or expanding any City sphere of influence, substantial loss of agricultural land is anticipated as outlined in Alternative 1 as described in the HCP/Conservation strategy. The other three alternatives document additional development scenarios with alternative 3 and 4 adding the proposed Placer Ranch and the De La Salle University and Community developments. The following chart estimates the loss of agricultural land and the economic impacts that would result from such loss under the four alternatives addressed in the HCP/Conservation strategy (see Exhibit 8 for a memo from the Agricultural Commissioner and a detailed breakdown by crop type).

This loss of the agricultural land base will be in addition to losses documented over the last ten years. The Placer County Agricultural Crop Report for 2002 indicates that between 1991 and 2001, there was a 35% decrease in orchard/vineyard land, 11% decrease in irrigated pasture and an 18% decrease in dry pasture.

	<b>Agricultural acres to be converted</b>	<b>Percentage Loss of Ag land base</b>	<b>Estimated value of Ag Production Loss</b>	<b>Loss of total income generated as a result of Ag production *</b>
Alternative 1 Develop existing spheres of influence and Placer Vineyards	9,225	8%	\$4,410,137.00	\$13,230,411.00
Alternative 2 The above development plus an expanded Roseville sphere including the West Roseville Specific Plan	14,510	14%	\$6,518,461.00	\$19,555,383.00
Alternative 3 The above development plus Placer Ranch, De La Salle, and expanded Lincoln sphere	18,735	18%	\$8,221,368.00	\$24,664,104.00
Alternative 4 The above development plus more expansion of Lincoln sphere and development north and south of the De La Salle site	24,635	23%	\$12,987,060.00	\$38,961,180.00

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#### **West Placer County Agriculture**

\* A multiplier of three has been utilized to represent the ripple effects agriculture creates in the local economy in the form of jobs, income, and output. Source: The Measure of California Agriculture 2002, UC Davis, Agricultural Issues Center, and The Friant Unit of the Central Valley (water) project, and the Friant Water Users Authority.

According to the Placer County Agricultural Commissioner, "More losses to the County's agricultural land base would be significant and every option for preserving that land base needs to be considered throughout the decision-making process. Options may include non-approval, relocation of the projects and/or mitigation of the negative impacts such development represents to farmland, habitat, and a rural quality of life. Despite the fact that the County has a Right-to-Farm Ordinance, there is no doubt that farming or ranching adjacent to or near urban development is much more difficult. Urban neighbors are often upset about standard farming and ranching practices and conflicts arise that are hard or impossible to resolve. The conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural land uses will obviously continue this trend unless the losses to the land base are mitigated. There are just so many acres left that are suitable for agricultural production and once they are developed, they are gone forever. If the extent of development approaches that

considered in the conservation strategy Alternatives 3 and 4, the future of agriculture in Placer County will be severely threatened. If these two large projects, which convert agricultural land to urban uses, are to move forward through the environmental /development review process, some permanent protection of surrounding lands is essential if agriculture is to continue to be viable in Placer County."

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Given the goals and policies of the General Plan calling for conservation of agriculturally designated land, is it appropriate to consider these two large scale General Plan amendments on agricultural lands? 2. Shall a threshold of minimum agricultural lands be established to ensure the preservation of a viable agricultural segment of the County's economy? 3. What types of protection can be afforded to remaining agricultural lands should these projects proceed?

**D. BUFFERS BETWEEN INCOMPATIBLE LAND USES** - The General Plan includes many policies that call for appropriate buffers between incompatible land uses, including the following:

"Goal 7.B: To minimize existing and future conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses in agriculturally-designated areas."

"7.B.1. The County shall identify and maintain clear boundaries between urban/suburban and agricultural areas and require land use buffers between such uses where feasible. These buffers shall occur on the parcel for which the development permit is sought and shall favor protection of the maximum amount of farmland."

According to Table I-4 of the PCGP, buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural uses should be from 100 to 800 feet, depending on the agricultural pursuit and the project-specific characteristics.

"Goal 4.G: To ensure the safe and efficient disposal or recycling of solid waste generated in Placer County."

"4.G.4. The County shall ensure that landfills and transfer stations are buffered from incompatible development."

"4G.11. When considering land use changes in the vicinity of a landfill operation, the County shall consider the landfill as the dominant land use in the area. In order to protect these facilities from incompatible encroachment, new residential land uses shall be separated from the property lines of active and future landfill sites by a buffer of one mile."

In addition to the one-mile buffer for residential uses, Table I-5 of the PCGP shows a minimum buffer between solid waste disposal sites and commercial sites of 1,000 feet and a minimum buffer between solid waste disposal sites and recreation of 500 feet.

The De La Salle University and Placer Ranch sites are located on and surrounded by agriculturally zoned property. Therefore, they will not only convert agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, they are likely to encroach into the agricultural buffers described in the General Plan as they are currently proposed.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: If the two proposals are to proceed forward through the environmental review process, should the full agricultural buffer requirements as prescribed in the General Plan be applied?

The Placer Ranch site is located directly south of the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill operation and future expansion area. The proposed conceptual site plan shows industrial, industrial park, office-professional and business park uses closest to the Landfill. However, residential uses are proposed within the one mile buffer around the Landfill and expansion area. In addition, the CSUS campus would be located approximately 3200 feet from the landfill and 2500 feet from the landfill expansion area. Commercial sites are proposed well within the buffer.

There are no specialized setbacks that apply to college campuses, but this use would appear to be fairly noise and nuisance sensitive. Both the Cities of Rocklin and Roseville have expressed concern about the proximity of the university campus to the landfill and expansion area (see attached Exhibit 11).

ISSUES TO CONSIDER 1. Should the County require adherence to the one-mile buffer between the landfill and expansion area and any residential uses? 2. Should on-campus housing be subject to the same standard? 3. If some reduced standard is to be considered, what should it be or how should it be calculated? 4. Given the sensitivity of campus activities including classrooms and outdoor uses to incompatible uses, particularly noise, odor, and dust, what would be an appropriate buffer between the landfill and expansion area and the campus?

**E. PRESERVATION OF INDUSTRIALLY ZONED LAND** - The General Plan includes a number of policies intended to foster job creation/retention in Placer County to encourage a jobs/housing balance. These policies include the following:

“1.N.10. The county shall support the development of primary wage earner job opportunities in the South Placer area to provide residents an alternative to commuting to Sacramento.”

“1.N.11. The County shall retain undeveloped industrially-zoned land in the unincorporated area for future use.”

The Placer Ranch proposal differs from this policy direction by converting a large segment of the Sunset Industrial Plan Industrial Reserve Area to a variety of uses including business park, industrial park, office professional, multi-family residential, single-family residential, and commercial uses. The reasons for the policy of retaining industrial land include financial considerations as well as job creation. The County has long considered the County's broader economic health to be dependent upon a balanced mix of land uses. Where many parts of the County are devoted to residential uses, typically requiring extensive services and therefore costs to the County, the industrial areas generally require few services and generate revenues that offset other costs. The loss of the County's industrial areas, and therefore future industrial uses, could tip this economic balance upon which many fiscal decisions of the County have been based.

Another consequence of the development proposed in the Sunset Industrial area will be the limitation on future expansion of the area. At present the Sunset Industrial Area includes a future expansion area and agricultural lands to the west. Over the long term, this current arrangement allows for future expansion to the west if demand exists at some point in time. The proposed Placer Ranch project would eliminate this option.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Given the recent residential growth within the Cities of Rocklin, Roseville and Lincoln and proposed residential projects, including the West Roseville Specific Plan and Placer Vineyards, would it be appropriate to consider a General Plan amendment that will

convert Industrial Reserve land to residential and other uses? 2. Should the amount of such land that is to be converted be dependent upon a showing that the overall County fiscal balance is not adversely affected? 3. Is it appropriate to foreclose on the future option of expanding the Sunset Industrial Area? 4. Is the remaining available industrial land sufficient to accommodate projected growth of industrial uses?

**F. ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT** - The General Plan includes numerous policies that encourage urban growth to be directed to the cities or to existing community plan areas, and to support logical growth patterns. These policies include the following:

Part III - Standards and Requirements within Future Study Area

“2. Where appropriate, annexation should be considered first for proposed urban projects. The County supports logical, planned growth, contiguous to existing urban areas.”

“3. The County shall consider GPAs that designate areas for significant new growth where the planning and design carries out the following objectives:

- a. Concentrate higher-density residential uses and appropriate support services along segments of the transportation system with good road and transit connections to the remainder of the region;
- b. Support concentrations of medium and high-density residential uses and higher intensities of non-residential uses within one-quarter mile of transit stops along truck lines of major transportation systems;”

“1.A.2. The County shall promote patterns of development that facilitate the efficient and timely provision of urban infrastructure and services.”

“1.M.1. The County shall concentrate most new growth within existing communities emphasizing infill development, intensified use of existing development, and expanded services, so individual communities become more complete, diverse, and balanced.”

“4.D.3. The County shall discourage extension of sewer service outside of city spheres of influence and community plan areas, except in limited circumstances to resolve a public health hazard resulting from existing development, or where there is a substantial overriding public benefit.”

Both proposals appear to contradict the above General Plan policies. Both proposals would be located outside of nearby cities and are not contiguous to existing urban areas. Neither project is located on a major transportation route or is served by transit located along a major transportation route. A portion of the Placer Ranch site is within the Roseville Sphere of Influence and the De La Salle site is located outside of Roseville's Sphere. Annexations to Roseville are not proposed, although the City has indicated they may be interested in annexing these project sites. The extension of sewer services outside of city spheres of influence and community plan areas would be required.

**ISSUES TO CONSIDER:** 1. Given the above General Plan policies related to directing major new growth to cities, and lack of consistency with current infrastructure plans, should the County consider the proposed General Plan amendments within the unincorporated area or suggest that project proponents approach the City of Roseville? 2. Should the Placer Ranch and De La Salle projects be treated differently since one is partially within the City of Roseville sphere of influence and the other is not? 3. Are the public benefits of these university campuses substantial enough to



warrant revising the General Plan policies related to the location of new development and annexation?

## **G. AVAILABILITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

The PCGP contains numerous policies to ensure that development occurs when and where infrastructure is available. Part III of the General Plan also includes the following policy to insure adequate infrastructure planning:

“9. New development areas shall be designed and constructed to provide all public infrastructure, facilities and service necessary to serve both initial and buildout populations, including but not limited to: adequate surface water supplies; sewage collection, treatment, and disposal facilities; public utilities; police and fire protection and emergency services, school and medical facilities where warranted by population; and public transportation. Extensions of new infrastructure, including water, sewer, roads, etc. should be compatible with existing incorporated Cities' General Plans.”

The extension of the new infrastructure is not compatible with existing incorporated Cities' General Plans (see attached Exhibit 11 for comments from the Cities of Rocklin and Roseville). Developing plans and financing for an adequate road network and sewer facilities will be necessary during the environmental review stage which must be coordinated with the surrounding cities who share these facilities. The adequacy of the road network will have to be evaluated extensively during the environmental review process, and coordinated with PCTPA, Caltrans, and the surrounding Cities. This issue is discussed further under items L and M. In terms of solid waste disposal, the addition of these two large projects to the area will likely generate the need to expand the landfill earlier than otherwise anticipated. It is critical to the County and the Cities of Lincoln, Rocklin and Roseville that share the facility, that no land use decisions are made that compromise the ability of the Landfill Authority to operate efficiently and expand their operations as necessary. The ability of the County to provide police and fire protection and emergency services will be tied to an economic analysis to insure that these developments generate revenues to cover the costs of providing such services (PCGP policy 4.B.3.) and the cost of providing facilities necessary to delivering the services (PCGP Policy 4.A.1.).

### **Issues related to Sewer Service**

Wastewater treatment in western Placer County is currently provided at facilities in Lincoln and Roseville. Both cities are constructing new treatment facilities. Lincoln's new plant will be in operation in 2005, and will replace its existing plant. Roseville's Pleasant Grove plant will be operational by the end of 2003, and will operate in conjunction with the existing Dry Creek plant. Options for additional wastewater treatment beyond the currently planned capacities include:

- Expansion of Roseville's facilities
- Expansion of Lincoln's new facility
- Development of new treatment facilities
- Transport of wastewater to Sacramento County for treatment.

### Roseville's Treatment Facilities

The Dry Creek/Pleasant Grove service area includes those areas generally south of Athens Avenue, east of Fiddymont Road, south of Baseline, east of Watt Avenue, and north of the Sacramento County line. The service area is currently being expanded to include the proposed West Roseville Specific Plan Annexation Area. Provision of services to areas outside the service area requires that the service area be formally expanded. In the case of the Roseville Regional facilities, expansion of the service area requires:

- Modification of the Roseville Regional Wastewater Treatment Masterplan. This plan details wastewater service and operations within the service area, establishing flow basin designations, discharge volumes, infrastructure needs, etc. This document was the basis for the environmental impact report prepared in 1996, analyzing wastewater services in the region.
- Modification of the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Roseville and the Fish and Wildlife Service. This MOU outlines conditions for the operation of the treatment facilities, and specifically defines the existing service area.
- Modifications to the Funding Agreement and Operations Agreement between the City of Roseville, the South Placer Municipal Utility District and the County. These agencies form the South Placer Wastewater Authority, a Joint Powers Authority responsible for funding capital construction of infrastructure.

Expansion of the Roseville Treatment Facilities would require the following actions:

- Both the Dry Creek and Pleasant Grove treatment plants would need to be expanded to accommodate significant flows beyond those projected in the Roseville Regional Wastewater Treatment Masterplan.
- The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) discharge permits for the Dry Creek and Pleasant Grove Treatment Plants would both need to be modified. These permits are issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and govern the operation of the treatment facilities.
- Expansion of the Pleasant Grove Treatment Plant beyond the master-planned capacity may require modifications to the designated 1000' non-residential buffer surrounding the plant.
- Expansion of treatment capacity would require construction of infrastructure to distribute reclaimed water. Due to regulatory constraints associated with discharging wastewater into Dry Creek and Pleasant Grove Creek, particularly during warm weather and low-flow periods, it is likely that the use and/or storage of reclaimed water will be required to far greater degrees in the future.

All of the areas west of Roseville are downhill from the treatment plants, requiring wastewater be pumped back to the treatment facilities.

All of the actions listed would require environmental review.

### Lincoln Treatment Facility

The City of Lincoln operates a secondary treatment system with spray irrigation for disposal. This plant is near capacity and cannot be expanded. Lincoln is currently constructing a new tertiary treatment facility with both discharge and land-disposal capabilities. This facility will be online in 2005, and will ultimately replace the existing plant.

Topography and distances may make transportation of wastewater to Lincoln more expensive than transportation to Roseville. Due to the land-intensive nature of Lincoln's treatment/disposal process, expansion of Lincoln's facilities may be far more expensive than expansion of Roseville's plants. Treatment at Lincoln's new facility would require:

- Development of agreements with the City for expanding and operating the treatment plant and associated infrastructure.
- Construction of infrastructure to transport wastewater uphill from the south and west, and to distribute reclaimed water back to those areas.
- Modification of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) discharge permit issued by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- Expansion of Lincoln's plant beyond the currently planned capacity would require the dedication of large tracts of land for spray irrigation.

All of the areas south and west of Lincoln are downhill from the treatment plant, requiring wastewater be pumped back to the treatment facilities.

All of the actions listed are subject to environmental review.

### Development of New Treatment Facilities

Accurately estimating the cost and timeframe for permitting and constructing a new treatment plant would require significant investment; however, permitting additional discharges to Pleasant Grove Creek or Auburn Ravine would be problematic at best. Any new treatment would need to be premised either on extensive use of reclaimed water and/or construction of a transmission pipe to the Sacramento River. The RWQCB is on record as being opposed to any new discharges to the Sacramento River upstream of the inlet to the City of Sacramento Water Treatment Plant.

### Transport of Wastewater to Sacramento County for Treatment

A large transmission pipe could be constructed to the Sacramento County Regional Sanitation District (SCRSD) treatment facility near Elk Grove. However, there is not sufficient capacity in the SCRSD collection/transmission system for the volume of water that could be produced by the various proposed developments. This alternative would; therefore, require approximately 30 miles of transmission pipe be constructed, primarily through developed areas of Sacramento County. This would likely prove to be far more expensive than any of the other alternatives.

In conclusion, there appears to be two potentially viable alternatives for sewerage the Placer Ranch project; via either the City of Roseville or Lincoln. However, each of these alternatives has its own set of regulatory as well as other implications. In regards to De La Salle, feasible sewerage options are more limited and currently favor only the Roseville option with the same set of regulatory issues as previously described.

#### Water Availability

In terms of infrastructure development, the most important concern is the availability of surface water to serve these projects. PCWA has consistently indicated that there is enough water available to serve projects that are consistent with the County and Cities' General Plans. This is true even after bringing on-line the proposed 35,000 acre foot extraction from the Sacramento River. The Agency's projection that supply and demand are balanced at the buildout of the existing general plans within the PCWA service area has several major assumptions built into it. Specifically:

- that the existing general plans can/will buildout to 80% of their maximum theoretical density;
- that there will be no increase in conservation/water use efficiency in either the Agency's treated or raw water systems;
- that there will be no increase in the supply of reclaimed water;
- that Roseville and San Juan Water District will require 100% of their contract/option quantities to supply the buildout needs of their service areas;
- that there will be no change in the current amount of water needed to supply agriculture in our service area; and,
- there will be no increase in use of groundwater.

Both projects would generate substantial urban growth beyond what is planned in the County and Cities' General Plans. The above policy No. 9 (from Part III of the PCGP) indicates that any new development area must be served by surface water supplies. With regard to the Placer Ranch project, we have heard from the applicant and PCWA that they may be able to utilize the water already allocated to the SIA area to serve this project. Since the entire site would be developed in an urban fashion and the SIA Plan only anticipated half of the site developing as industrial land, it will be important to determine the assumptions the applicant used in reaching this conclusion. It may be that water intended for the core industrial/commercial area of the Plan would have to be re-allocated to serve Placer Ranch and result in limits on industrial development in other parts of the Sunset Industrial Area.

The applicants for the De La Salle University and Community have proposed the use of groundwater, at least on an interim basis. This runs counter to numerous General Plan policies, including No. 9 cited above, as a condition for considering any General Plan amendment to allow urban uses.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Should the projects be considered if infrastructure plans can be amended to demonstrate how adequate public services and facilities can be provided and funded by the new development? 2. Is the Board willing to consider modifying General Plan policies which require that new development be served with surface water? 3. Is the Board willing to consider re-allocating water supplies that could serve other properties in order to serve these two projects with surface water?

## **H. SUNSET INDUSTRIAL AREA (SIA) PLAN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

The Placer Ranch project is entirely within the Sunset Industrial Area (SIA). The single most important goal of the SIA Plan is to improve the ability of the County to attract new industrial development and to retain and allow for the expansion of existing development in a modern, and attractive industrial park setting. The SIA Plan includes numerous goals and policies which call for industrial uses to predominate in order to create and retain jobs, to preserve agricultural land, to provide a fairgrounds re-location area, to prevent residential uses, to retain suitable habitat, and to provide adequate buffers around public facilities, particularly the landfill. These goals, objectives, and policies include the following:

**Goal:** “To improve the opportunities for industrial and other employment based development in the SIA in order to attract new industries, retain existing industries, to allow existing industries to expand, and to provide the necessary public and private sector services and facilities for all area employers, businesses and patrons.”

**Objectives:**

“Protect existing and future industrial development from residential encroachment.”  
“Protect the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill facility, the Western Placer Waste Management Authority Material Recovery Facility, and landfill expansion properties from the incompatible encroachment of residential, commercial and professional uses.”  
“Prepare and implement a habitat conservation/mitigation plan in order to balance the need for economic growth against the County's desire to provide suitable habitat for the ongoing viability of the area's plant and animal resources.”  
“Examine the potential to move an expanded Placer County Fairgrounds from the City of Roseville into the SIA. ....”

**Policies:**

“1.A.1. Protect the Sunset Industrial Area from encroachment by incompatible uses.”  
“1.A.6. (in part) The Sunset Industrial Area shall be dominated by an industrial land inventory.”  
“1.A.8. The County shall permit the development of only agricultural, industrial or similar compatible land uses around Western Placer Waste Management Authority properties. Residential uses around these properties are not considered a compatible use.”

**Goal 1.E:** “To provide for the long-term conservation and use of agriculturally designated lands.”

**Policies:**

“1.E.1. The County shall protect agriculturally designated areas from conversion to non-agricultural uses.”  
“1.E.5. The County shall encourage infill development in undeveloped areas of the Sunset Industrial Area as an alternative to expanding urban uses into agricultural areas.”

**Goal 8.A.** “To maintain a healthy and diverse local economy that meets the present and future employment, public safety, and service needs of Placer County residents and to expand the economic base to better serve the needs of residents and local businesses.”

**Policy:**

“8.B.2. The County shall seek to retain the SIA as an unincorporated, non-residential region for the development of employment-generating uses and activities.”

The Placer Ranch project, as proposed, would convert agriculturally designated land and Industrial Reserve land to a variety of uses including a college campus and 4794 residential units. Residential, and other sensitive uses, are proposed within the one-mile residential buffer from the landfill and expansion area. Potentially incompatible uses are proposed in close proximity to industrial uses. Options for habitat conservation and re-location of the fairgrounds will be reduced.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Should the County consider amendments to the Placer County General Plan and the Sunset Industrial Area Plan to accommodate the Placer Ranch project? 2. Should the County request that the Placer Ranch applicants eliminate residential uses, other than on-campus housing, to provide greater consistency with the SIA Plan? 3. Should the County require a redesign of the project to locate the campus and any related housing as far from the landfill and industrial areas as feasible (to the west) to eliminate potential incompatibility issues?

**I. IMMEDIATE CANCELLATION OF A WILLIAMSON ACT CONTRACT**

The westerly 640 acres of the Placer Ranch project site is within an Agricultural Preserve, subject to a Williamson Act Contract. The Land Conservation Act (aka Williamson Act) was passed by the State Legislature in 1965 in order to preserve the maximum amount of the limited supply of agricultural land in the State. Financial incentives are provided to farmers and ranchers in the form of reduced property taxes for property owners who maintain their land in agricultural production. The State and local regulations allow interested property owners to enter into a contract with the County to keep their land in production for an on-going ten year period, which automatically renews every year unless a property owner requests to enter into a 10-year phaseout by filing a Notice of Non-Renewal. Placer Ranch property owners filed a Notice of Non-renewal in November 2002 to enter into a 10-year phase-out to remove the land from contract. They have requested an immediate cancellation of the Williamson Act Contract in order to accommodate the proposed Placer Ranch project.

Both State law and the Placer County Administrative Rules allow the Board of Supervisors to cancel a Williamson Act contract only under extraordinary circumstances. In fact, it has never been done in Placer County in order to allow for the development of contracted lands.

In order to approve a cancellation request, the Board of Supervisors must find that either 1) the cancellation is consistent with the purposes of the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 or 2) the cancellation is in the public interest in that other public concerns substantially outweigh the objectives of the Land Conservation Act. In either case, it is necessary for the Board to make all of the following findings: 1) that cancellation is not likely to result in the removal of adjacent lands from agricultural use, 2) an alternative use is proposed which is consistent with the County General Plan, 3) cancellation will not result in discontinuous patterns of urban development and 4) there is no proximate noncontracted land which is available and suitable for the proposed alternative use, or development of the contracted land would provide more contiguous patterns of urban development than development of proximate noncontracted land.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Does the Board find it appropriate to entertain a request for cancellation of the Williamson Act contract in order to accommodate the proposed project that would place primarily residential uses on the contracted land? 2. If the Board does not find it appropriate to consider canceling the Williamson Act contract, is it appropriate to process the proposed General Plan amendment, but notify the applicants that they will have to wait for phase-out to occur before development can take place on the contracted land? 3. Another option would be for the Board to indicate that cancellation of the Williamson Act contract could only be considered in order to accommodate the proposed branch campus of CSUS, a public university, so the finding of public interest could be made. (This would require the applicants to re-design the proposal to place the campus on the westerly 640 acres. In addition to better meeting Williamson Act requirements for cancellation, placing the campus on the western edge would provide a more definite boundary to development and a more compatible use to surrounding agricultural uses.)

#### **J. COUNTY/ROSEVILLE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

In July of 1997 the County and the City of Roseville entered into a Memorandum of Understanding that addresses issues of mutual concern related to land use in the "Roseville/South Placer County area"(See Exhibit 10). One specific component of the MOU potentially affects the proposed Placer Ranch project. Section Six addresses the landfill buffer zone as follows:

*"Both the City and the County hereby acknowledge their continued support and endorsement of the policy of maintaining a one mile buffer zone around landfill operations, as set forth in Policy No. 4.G.11 of the Placer County General Plan..."*

Neither the Placer Ranch nor De La Salle projects are within the "transition area" referenced in the MOU however both are on the immediate border of that area, both are in the greater "Roseville/South Placer County area" referenced in the preamble, and both are the types of projects that the MOU was intended to address as they affect the City. For that reason another section of the MOU may provide guidance to be considered in this discussion. Section Four of the MOU addresses development standards as follows:

*"...any approval resulting from such application shall be conditioned to require that all physical development, infrastructure development, and public services be constructed, installed, financed, and provided at an "urban" standard of development or service. By way of illustration and not limitation, the parties agree that the minimum standards set forth in the "Development Standards" document attached hereto.....shall be required of all development within the Transition Area...."*

The attached "Development Standards" (part of Exhibit 10) indicate that surface water must be provided. The De La Salle project has now proposed the use of groundwater for at least an interim period of time to serve the project. Lastly, the City of Roseville has suggested (see Exhibit 11) that the MOU should be expanded to address the two project areas, thus allowing for a more formal coordination process. Such an agreement would be consistent with section 16 of Part III of the General Plan which states:

"16. In conjunction with the processing of a GPA application for development located within the future study area, the County will enter into an agreement with the adjoining city that would specify acceptable levels of service (including police, fire, park programs, etc.) and measures to mitigate impacts to municipal facilities (transportation, circulation, parks, libraries, etc.)."

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Does the specific reference to the landfill buffer in the MOU mean that the staff should ensure that such a buffer is maintained with the Placer Ranch project? 2. Should the "Development Standards" attached to the MOU provide guidance to staff in determining the appropriate public service standards for the Placer Ranch and De La Salle projects?

#### **K. CONSERVATION STRATEGY/HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN**

As discussed earlier, the staff is working with a number of resource agencies on the development of an NCCP/HCP to address impacts associated with endangered species and their associated habitat. The staff has prepared an analysis, called the HCP Draft Conservation Strategy, that was released in mid-September. The draft identifies some of the anticipated impacts associated with growth on a number of endangered species and a range of alternative conservation and growth scenarios that will be used for further evaluation. The subject projects are incorporated into two of the four growth scenarios

The staff seeks direction on certain issues related to the NCCP/HCP; because these projects have a large footprint on the landscape and they are located in an area of the County that contains a number of key resources (e.g., vernal pools, riparian and grassland habitats) it will be important for staff and the proponents to understand how such projects can be evaluated for a determination of impacts and how those impacts should be mitigated. In particular, it will be important to know how a comprehensive mitigation strategy will be not only consistent with the NCCP/HCP but how it can initiate the implementation of such a program.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Should the projects be designed or located to ensure that they do not prevent the successful development and implementation of the HCP/NCCP? 2. Should the projects emphasize the avoidance of important biological resources through project design and further to avoid such resources in a way that provides for offsite connectivity?, or 3. Should the projects mitigate biological resources entirely offsite through large-scale conservation that also addresses the loss of open space and agricultural lands? This is a key part of the discussion related to the Conservation Plan. There is a concern that the historical emphasis on avoidance of small on-site areas of natural habitat will result in a highly fragmented landscape of sensitive natural communities that will provide diminished value over time. 4. Should the projects be required to mitigate their open space and biological resource impacts entirely within the political boundaries of Placer County except in those circumstances where there are opportunities such as watershed relationships, species population relationships or opportunities to improve connectivity? 5. Should the projects be required to mitigate their impacts before the anticipated "take" of the species and/or the habitat they inhabit? Many conservation plans have a lag between the availability of funding (especially if it's a fee-based program) and the ability to provide compensatory lands. Additionally, because restoration is an important part of the County's Conservation Plan, the 2-10 year period it takes for restored habitats to mature represents a temporal impact that must be addressed. 6. Should the projects be treated as independent proposals or be treated as "interim" projects and be incorporated into the unfolding conservation plan and follow the guidance from future documents?

#### **L. PLACER PARKWAY ROUTE ALIGNMENT**



The effort to identify a corridor between Highway 65 and Highway 99/70 for the Placer Parkway is underway. The proposed project's Tier 1 environmental document will result in the selection of a corridor alignment. This work should be completed by 2007.

The process must meet both State and Federal environmental requirements. The Federal Resource Agencies require local agencies to follow a process that places top priority on environmental constraints. Federal funding will be needed to plan and construct the route so federal procedures need to be followed.

It would be preferable to wait until the highway alignment is established before approving land development projects along the corridor. This is because the goal of the route alignment process is to find the route that results in the least environmental damage while meeting the project objectives. This process is best done on a regional scale and with a minimum of constraints. A highway alignment that avoids a newly approved project at the expense of the environment would face serious, possibly fatal, obstacles.

The proponents of the projects (West Roseville Specific Plan, Placer Ranch and De La Salle University) have advocated for a process where their projects are considered prior to route adoption. There is risk in doing this in that the best highway alignment from an environmental standpoint could conflict with any of these land development projects. This may not be known until late in the highway alignment process after the land development project is already approved. The risk can be reduced, but not eliminated by requiring additional environmental studies for these proposals. In the case of Placer Ranch, the Parkway alignment must pass through the project and therefore the challenge is to find the best highway alignment from an environmental standpoint and then plan the land development around it. In the case of De La Salle University and Community, the question is whether the best highway alignment passes through the proposed site. In order to answer these questions, an extra level of environmental review is necessary. This work will involve looking at areas adjacent to the project site and may involve duplicate studies. However, even with this extra work there is still a risk because individual projects cannot view the entire fifteen-mile corridor and make assessments based upon overall impacts. Further, these incremental evaluations could "point" the Parkway corridor to a sensitive environmental area.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER: 1. Should these land development proposals be delayed until the Placer Parkway alignment is established? 2. If not, should the projects be required to conduct supplemental environmental studies to reduce the risk to the Placer Parkway Route Alignment process now underway by PCTPA and Placer County?

#### **M. TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING**

Transportation planning in the West Placer region has forecast the need for major Transportation improvements in the future. These forecasts rely on the General Plans of the jurisdictions in the region for land use assumptions. Major new land development proposals will result in more traffic and therefore additional improvements. More importantly the new facilities will be needed sooner.

Local roadway systems have typically been funded through traffic mitigation fee programs. Regional facilities are funded through a combination of State, Federal and local sources. A recent analysis has shown that funding for the regional system falls well short of available

revenue. The new land development proposals will exacerbate this problem unless they construct extensive improvements or contribute funds well in excess of current fee programs.

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is the main source of funds for regional improvements. Currently these funds are being spent on the Hwy 65 Bypass of Lincoln. In order to construct this project (\$210 million), the County will be borrowing against the future share of these funds, essentially using all available STIP funds through the year 2014.

The next three major regional improvements that will be needed are the widening of Hwy 65, Placer Parkway and improvements to I-80 through Roseville. The South Placer Regional Transportation Authority (SPRTA) has provided for \$50 million in funding for Placer Parkway in the fee program for the region. The cost of the facility will exceed \$300 million. The remainder of the funding for the facility has not been identified. The cost of widening Hwy 65 has not been determined and there are no fees currently being collected for this work. The I-80 project is the County's number one priority for Federal funds under the next Transportation Enhancement Act (TEA) cycle, however no construction funds have been identified (\$100 million plus). The funding for all three of these regional facilities goes way beyond the current capacity of Federal, State and local funding programs.

**ISSUES TO CONSIDER:** Should the consideration of major new land development proposals include an analysis of the cost, funding, and schedule for major regional transportation infrastructure projects (e.g., Placer Parkway and Hwy 65)?

## **N. ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS FOR UNIVERSITIES**

As indicated above, there are numerous potential benefits provided by higher education facilities in Placer County. In many ways the university proposals themselves are far less problematic than the additional development proposed to accompany them. Because of the potential benefits it may be appropriate to look at possible alternative sites or project modifications that could accommodate the universities. There are a number of alternative locations within West Placer County that could accommodate university campuses without amending the General Plan or extending urban development and infrastructure further to the west than currently anticipated. Although such sites are not without challenges, they may be far more easily met. These areas or project changes include the following opportunities:

### **A. Sunset Industrial Plan Area**

The SIA Plan encompasses 8883 acres - of that 3646 acres are designated agricultural, 3479 acres are designated industrial, and 941 acres are designated commercial or business park. The Placer Ranch site is primarily within the agricultural designation (about 60%), with most of the rest designated industrial, but located within the Industrial Reserve Area intended to be used as an extension of the Industrial Core area at such time that additional development area is needed. Substantial new residential growth is occurring or is proposed within the City of Roseville, immediately adjacent to the proposed Placer Ranch project. The CSUS campus is proposed within the agricultural area, with residential uses proposed to the south and west. The proposed campus site could be moved to the west, replacing the proposed residential uses, and provide a more logical buffer for agricultural uses while also maximizing the distance from the landfill, and maximizing potential industrial uses. The necessary residential uses to support the students and staff of the

university would be available to the immediate south. Such an alternative could address many issues that will be raised by the current proposed project design.

#### B. Placer Vineyards Specific Plan Area

The 1994 General Plan designated the area now known as Placer Vineyards as a major new growth area to be planned and developed through the Specific Plan process. The Placer Vineyards Specific Plan has been prepared in draft form and the accompanying EIR will be released for public comment within the next few months. The Specific Plan area encompasses 5,158 acres and will accommodate as many as 14,000 residential units in addition to business park, office, town center office/commercial and commercial uses intended to generate up to 14,000 jobs. This is a very large new growth area already designated for development that could accommodate one or more university campuses.

#### C. West Roseville Specific Plan and Sphere of Influence Expansion Area

The West Roseville Specific Plan encompasses 3,162 acres west of the City of Roseville that is proposed for annexation and an additional 2,100 acres is proposed to be added to the City's sphere of influence. This is an undeveloped area proposed for development into residential neighborhoods, community commercial, business/professional, light industrial and industrial land uses. Again, sufficient area is available to accommodate one or more university campuses that would be located within the community of Roseville where a broader level of land uses and services would be available. This project does not require a General Plan amendment on the part of Placer County, but it does require an amendment to Roseville's Sphere of Influence, which must be approved by LAFCO. The remainder of the Expanded Sphere, particularly the area south of the WRSP and north of Placer Vineyards, is also an available undeveloped area that could accommodate a university and would provide a more compact, contiguous pattern of growth than the proposed De La Salle site. A portion of this site is under the same ownership as the proposed De La Salle site.

#### D. Adjacent to the West Roseville Specific Plan Area

Yet another alternative would be to relocate the proposed campus to the property that immediately adjoins the WRSP area and include the "community" property, intended for residential and commercial uses, within the Sphere of Influence expansion area to the south. Again this would result in a more logical pattern of development while minimizing impacts on agricultural lands and habitat, reduce the cost of extending infrastructure, provide residential and commercial support uses in close proximity and still allow for the endowment concept presented by the project proponent.

Whether the landowners or the Board wish to discuss alternative locations for these types of development at this time, the issue must be addressed as a part of any future environmental review for either project.

**ISSUES TO CONSIDER:** Should the County work with the university proponents to explore alternative locations that do not raise the same agricultural, infrastructure, water, land use, or circulation issues as the two sites currently proposed?

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The staff has addressed many topics in this report that in one way or another affect the Board's consideration of, and interrelationship between, the four major proposals discussed. In an effort to assist the Board in providing clear direction on how the County should proceed from this point, these topics have been condensed into nine issues. These nine issues are summarized and specific questions attached to each one in Exhibit 16. Possible responses, are also provided to assist the Board in weighing alternative approaches to the issues. The staff suggests that the Board, following a presentation on the topics in this report and public comment from project proponents, other agencies and the public, consider addressing the issues in the order presented in Exhibit 16.

The staff's recommendations, when taken collectively, would result in the following direction:

- The County is very supportive of locating one or more universities in western Placer County. It is possible to resolve many of the issues identified by modifying the current project proposals.
- Amendments to the General Plan will be entertained in order to accommodate one or more universities.
- Existing planned development can provide much of the support uses, in immediately adjacent areas, especially housing, for both proposed universities. The proposed sphere expansion area can provide an opportunity for the private endowment needed for the private university and this alternative should be considered.
- Infrastructure needs must be met including the funding and construction of adequate sewers, water infrastructure from a surface water supply, and roads.
- The landfill must be protected from encroachment of incompatible uses including most types of residential uses. Although the one-mile buffer for residential uses is appropriate, the County would consider a project that placed the campus as far from the landfill as possible on the same ownership, and would consider on-campus housing if appropriately buffered.
- New development that uses agricultural lands and removes suitable wildlife habitat must be responsible for creating and financing a program that permanently protects other areas.
- The Placer Parkway routing process must be considered concurrently with the planning for new development within the corridor being studied.

The staff is prepared to assist the Board and to provide information in any way that will be helpful to this discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Frederic K. Yeager  
Planning Director

FKY/PLANNER'S INITIALS:DU

## **EXHIBITS:**

1. Maps\*
  - a) Base Map
  - b) Sphere's of Influence
  - c) Key Properties & Proposed Roadways
  - d) Future Study Area & M.O.U. Area
  - e) Existing General Plan Designations
  - f) Circulation Diagram
  - g) Conservation Lands
  - h) Detailed Land Use 1 & 2
2. Project Description – Placer Ranch\*
3. Project Description - De La Salle University & Community\*
4. Project Description - Placer Vineyards\*
5. Project Description - West Roseville Specific Plan\*
6. Part III - PCGP
7. HCP/NCCP - Draft Conservation Strategy Overview\*
8. Agricultural Commissioner's Report
9. 2002 Agricultural Crop Report
10. MOU County/Roseville
11. Correspondence - Roseville
12. Correspondence - Rocklin
13. "Implications of a Private University in Placer County"
14. "The Key Role of Universities in Our Nation's Economic Growth and Urban Revitalization"
15. Summary of key issues - 1 page
16. Issues 1-9 **\* Provided under separate cover**

cc: CEO  
 County Counsel  
 Facilities  
 DPW  
 Planning  
 Economic Development  
 Landfill Authority  
 Roseville  
 Rocklin  
 Lincoln  
 PCTPA  
 PCWA  
 Placer Ranch  
 De La Salle  
 Placer Vineyards  
 West Roseville Specific Plan Applicant  
 BWG  
 BIA  
 Sierra Club  
 West Placer MAC  
 Rural Lincoln MAC  
 Planning Commission

/fred/2003/West Placer Visioning/westplacerbosmemo